

REMARKS

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated March 22, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 7, and 13, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Yamakawa '451 (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,451); and rejected claims 3, 5-6, 9-10 and 12-13, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Yamakawa '451 in view of Saito '282 (U.S. Patent No. 6,584,282).

The Examiner objected to the Abstract of the disclosure for allegedly containing a minor informality. The Examiner also indicated that 4, 8, and 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1-4 and 6-13 to provide a clearer presentation of the claimed subject matter and has introduced new claims 14-16. Applicant submits that no new matter has been introduced. Applicant has also amended the Abstract, as indicated by the Examiner, and therefore, requests the immediate withdrawal of the objection to the Abstract.

Applicant points out that new independent claims 14-16 incorporate the patentable features of claims 8 and 11, rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, for the reasons indicated by the Examiner, claims 14-16 are allowable.

Applicant respectfully traverses the prior art rejections, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and §103(a), for the reasons presented below.

As described by the various embodiments disclosed in the specification, the present invention is directed to maintaining good light collecting performance even in cases where an image sensor, such as a CCD is used, by configuring the system so that an incident angle of a ray at a position where the ray height is high while making the entire length of the optical system short.

Along these lines, claim 1 has been amended to positively recite that at least one of surfaces of the fourth lens is an aspherical surface. In contrast, there is nothing in the applied references that teach such a feature. For example, the Yamakawa '451 reference relates to a conversion lens to intervene between the image surface 3 and the main lens 2. There is, however, nothing in Yamakawa '451 that teaches or even suggests that at least one of the fourth lens surfaces is aspherical.

For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that claim 1 cannot be anticipated by Yamakawa '451. Nor can claims 2, 7, and 13, which depend from claim 1 be anticipated by Yamakawa '451. Accordingly, Applicant requests the immediate withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 7, and 13, under §102(b).

Moreover, the teachings of the Saito '282 reference do nothing to cure the deficiencies of Yamakawa '451 identified above. As such, claim 1 and claims 2, 4, 7-11, and 13, which depend from claim 1, are also patentable over the combination of Yamakawa '451 and Saito '282.

Further, independent claim 3 recites features that have been demonstrated as being patentable relative to claim 1, such as, that at least one of surfaces of the fourth lens is an aspherical surface. Accordingly, claim 3 is also patentable for at least the same reasons as presented regarding claim 1. And claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, which depend from claim 3 are also patentable at least by virtue of dependency as well as for their additional recitations. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, under §103(a).

All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicant's Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter. Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975, Order No. 061069-0309334.

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The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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